



IDPH News Release

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Pandemic Influenza Planning Guide Available for Iowa Schools **State health and education departments create planning tools and offer assistance**

Pandemic influenza planning is on the minds of many, including Iowa schools. Iowa schools already assist the state in tracking seasonal influenza; therefore, their role will be vital in protecting the health and safety of students, employees, and their families during a potential pandemic influenza. The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) and Iowa Department Education (DE) have partnered to provide [guidance and resources](#) on actions schools can take when preparing pandemic influenza plans.

IDPH created a pandemic influenza planning guide for schools. The guide offers recommendations for schools to develop a pandemic plan to manage the impact of a pandemic on schools by reducing the spread of the virus within school facilities and sustaining education functions.

“School districts must work closely with county and other local health officials to have a plan outlining the school roles in continuing to educate student during an outbreak,” said DE Director Judy Jeffrey. “Not only could a pandemic affect a large percentage of school staff and students with illness, schools could be asked to serve the community in other ways as a shelter or food provider.”

Two Iowa Communications Network (ICN) broadcasts aired Monday, April 17 and provided essential pandemic influenza information to school district personnel. Topics included a history and background of pandemic influenza, the identification of planning initiatives for schools, information about current local and state disease tracking activities, and an explanation of a school’s role in the screening and reporting of students and staff with influenza. An additional ICN broadcast is planned for Monday, April 24.

“Everyone has a role to play in pandemic influenza planning and preparedness,” said IDPH Director Mary Mincer Hansen. “Partnerships, like the one between public health and education, are critical in building the state’s pandemic response.”

The pandemic planning guides for Iowa schools and additional resources to assist in pandemic influenza planning are available at www.idph.state.ia.us/pandemic and www.state.ia.us/educate/.

The Iowa Department of Public Health is observing 125 years of “Advancing Health through the Generations.” Check our web site to learn more about Iowa’s public health efforts.